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WTOP EDITORIAL

JACK JUREY: This is a WTOP Editorial. The episode involving CIA boss Richard Helms and Senator J. William Fulbright appears to have ended with nobody being badly wounded. Mr. Helms has made a handsome apology to Senator Fulbright and the Foreign Relations Committee, and has freely acknowledged his mistake. That occurred when Mr. Helms dropped a note to the St. Louis Globe Democrat, praising an editorial titled "Brickbats for Fulbright."

The editorial praised the Senate vote against a resolution to add three members of the Foreign Relations Committee to the CIA watch-dog committee. The CIA is now safe, the Globe Democrat declared, from the militant Doves on Fulbright's committee. Mr. Helms then wrote the newspaper, expressing his pleasure with the editorial, which, he said, reflects so well your paper's policy of supporting what it believes to be right and opposing what it believes to be wrong without regard to party politics.

Senator Fulbright and numerous of his colleagues were understandably upset by this exchange, so Mr. Helms made a voluntary appearance before the Foreign Relations Committee and explained that the letter itself was drafted by a subordinate and that he, Helms, signed it without recognizing its full significance. That seemed to satisfy everyone with the possible exception of Wayne Morse, and the crisis is over.

We can't resist saying, however, that as we said in an editorial in mid-May, the idea of having Foreign Relations represented on the watch-dog committee seems quite a good one. It's unfortunate that the proposal has been rejected.